



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of General Counsel  
Management Planning & Analysis

810 Vermont Avenue NW  
Washington DC 20420  
[www.va.gov/ogc](http://www.va.gov/ogc)

In Reply Refer To: **19-04788-F**

March 15, 2019

**Sent via email address: 52378-51966952@requests.muckrock.com**

Mr. Jasper Craven  
Reporter  
MuckRock News  
411A Highland Avenue  
Dept. MR 52378  
Somerville, MA 02144-2516

Dear Mr. Craven:

This is in reference to your Freedom of Information Act/Privacy Act request, dated February 27, 2019, which you sent to the VA FOIA Service mailbox. Your request was interpreted as a FOIA request for records which may be in the custody of the Office of General Counsel and on March 15, was transferred to the OGC FOIA Officer who is designated to respond to such requests on behalf of the General Counsel. You have specifically asked for:

***"All emails between Dr. Michael Fallon (Michael.fallon@va.gov), Gabrielle Saunders (Gabrielle.saunders@va.gov), Stephanie McGovern (Stephanie.mcgovern@va.gov), Jake Leinenkugel and all officials in VA leadership (<https://www.va.gov/opa/bios/>) concerning service dogs for PTSD between Jan. 1, 2017 and present day. Keywords include: "ptsd" "dog" "canine" "study" "results" "evidence" and "price."***

Your request was assigned to OGC FOIA Tracking Number 19-04788-F. Please refer to this number in any future correspondence to this office.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a decentralized process for responding to FOIA requests which means that each VA component, i.e., OGC, VHA, VBA, etc., has a separate designated FOIA Officers responsible for responding to requests by the component office. All FOIA requests for Office of General Counsel records are processed by the FOIA Officer in Washington, DC.

The Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552(A)(a)(ii), places all FOIA requesters in one of three categories for fee purposes. The three categories of FOIA requesters are commercial use; educational institutions, noncommercial scientific institutions, representatives of the news media; and all other requesters.

We have classified you as a representative of the news media. As such, we may charge you for some of our duplication costs, but we will not charge you for our search or review costs; you also are entitled to up to 100 pages of photocopies (or an equivalent volume) for free. See 38 C.F.R. § 1.561(b)(7). If, after taking into consideration your fee category entitlements, our processing costs are less than \$50.00, we will not bill you because the cost of collection would be greater than the fee collected. See 38 C.F.R. § 1.561(b)(7).

For your information, this office assigns incoming requests to one of three tracks: simple, complex, or expedited. **Each FOIA request is then handled on a first-in, first-out (FIFO) basis in relation to other requests in the same track.** At this time, your request has been assigned to the Complex track. Simple requests usually receive a response in about two to three months, whereas complex requests take considerably longer.

We regret the necessity of this delay, but assure you that your request will be processed as soon as possible. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact M. Renee Baxter at email address [OGCFOIArequests@va.gov](mailto:OGCFOIArequests@va.gov) or you may contact the OGC FOIA Requester Service at (202) 461-7860 between the work hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time).

Sincerely,

*M. Renee Baxter*

M. Renee Baxter  
OGC FOIA Officer